

Civil society reacts to reports of a catalog of criticism leveled at the International Seabed Authority and call for an immediate independent review

An article which appeared in the [LA Times](#) today has raised serious concerns about the conduct, integrity and effectiveness of the International Seabed Authority (ISA), the intergovernmental body charged by the UN with safeguarding the deep ocean.

NGOs concerned with ocean protection have said the article should send a wave of alarm through the international community about the future of the deep sea and called on the UN Secretary General to urgently commission an independent review focused on how we can achieve proper protection for the deep sea and its vital role in climate mitigation and food security.

Last month, the ISA Council met in Kingston, Jamaica, to negotiate regulations which, if approved, would see the deep ocean opened for commercial mining as soon as July 2023. The Deep Sea Conservation Coalition advocated for deep sea protection throughout the negotiations, consistently raising concerns about the ISA's non-transparent decision-making processes, conflicts of interest and its extractive mindset.

The DSCC's Duncan Currie said "far from being a body working to protect the deep seabed, our global commons, the ISA is operating as a miners' club, pushing for finalization of regulations so that commercial strip-mining of the deep can begin. It is not fit for purpose and this new article underlines that. It must be independently investigated and the rush to mine that it spearheads, should be stopped."

Rather than delivering benefits to all of humanity, if deep-sea mining were to go ahead, it would only serve to financially benefit a handful of companies in the global North whilst causing large scale irreversible environmental destruction and a loss of critical ecosystem services for present and future generations. It could also result in a loss of potential medicines, disturb critical carbon stocks locked away in the deep, and may have impacts on commercial fisheries. Local groups and communities as well as a collective of leaders in the Pacific region are calling for a ban on mining the deep sea, recognizing the risks it poses to their livelihoods and historical and cultural connection to a living ocean.

Matthew Gianni, of the DSCC added: "The ISA must be a body that all humankind can trust to represent the interests of the many, not the few. It needs to be fundamentally reformed to achieve this: it needs to become the body that protects the deep ocean and its contribution to all humankind, not the body that exploits it.

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Notes to the Editor

- The deep sea is one of the largest reservoirs of biodiversity on the planet and one of our greatest allies in tackling climate breakdown. If deep-sea mining were permitted to go ahead, it would result in large-scale, irreversible damage to some of the most fragile and biodiverse ecosystems on the planet.
- As the race to exploit the deep seabed for commercial gain gathers pace, so does global pressure for a [moratorium or ban](#) on the industry:
 - At the Our Ocean conference in Palau, the [Pacific Parliamentarians Alliance on Deep Sea Mining](#) (PPADSM) launched, Hawaiian actor Jason Momoa called for a ban on deep-sea mining and [Tuvalu's Foreign Affairs Minister](#) announced that the country has withdrawn its sponsorship of would-be deep-sea miners, Tuvalu Circular Metals.
 - The Spanish Government also took a first step towards banning deep-sea mining in its national waters last week with a [Royal Decree](#) entering into force on April 13th, establishing new criteria for activities carried out in the country's jurisdiction, effectively endorsing a moratorium, a global and official pause on deep-sea mining.

About the DSCC

The DSCC is made up of more than 90 non-government organizations, fishers' organizations and law and policy institutes working together to protect vulnerable deep-sea ecosystems. We aim to substantially reduce the greatest threats to life in the deep sea and to safeguard the long-term health, integrity and resilience of deep-sea ecosystems.

Our main focus is on ensuring the sustainability of deep-sea fisheries and addressing the potential threat of deep-sea mining.

Interviews are available with the following experts from the DSCC:

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